



# Fully, Freely, & Entirely

Volume 17, Number 1

Newsletter of the Delaware Heritage Commission

Summer, 2006

## ***Delaware: A Guide to the First State* Available Now**

*Delaware: A Guide to the First State* was initially published in 1938. It was produced under the aegis of the Federal Writers' Project (FWP), a part of the New Deal's Works Projects Administration (WPA), which provided work for 10,000 unemployed or underemployed American writers from 1935 to 1943. The FWP was proud of its publications because they allowed "Americans [to] discover America." All of the state guide books were published between 1937 and 1941, and were widely praised with the *Washington Post* characterizing the entire series as "first-class literature."

Like the other state guide books, *Delaware: A Guide to the First State* is illustrated, has a bibliography, and is divided into three sections. The first section contains general background material including history, natural settings, economics, folklore and customs, government, etc. Because the publication date of 1938 coincided with the tercentenary celebration of the first permanent European settlement in Delaware, a significant number of the guide book's pages on history deal with the seventeenth century.

The second section focuses on individual cities and towns, while section three features a detailed guide to 16 road tours to help acquaint both visitors and Delawareans with the First State's landscape, architectural styles, and interesting local color. Indeed, during the great uncertainty caused by the economic depression of the 1930s, the unchanging nature of local landscapes, buildings, and traditional folk rituals provided welcome visual assurances of continued social stability and cultural continuity. The book is a fascinating look at Delaware during the Great Depression.

**Softcover editions - \$15**

**Hardcover editions - \$25**

**Both editions include a replica of the 1938 map of Delaware. Purchase the map alone for \$5.**

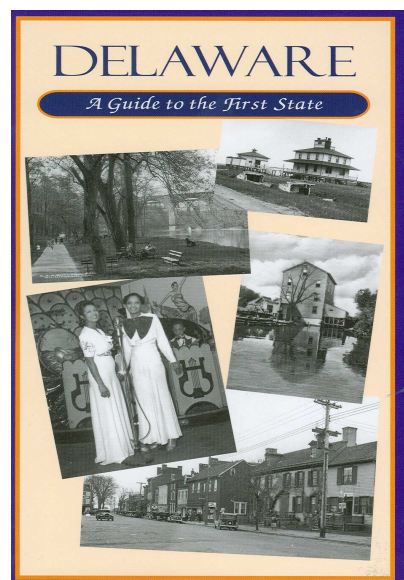
To order please visit [www.state.de.us/heritage](http://www.state.de.us/heritage)  
or call (302) 744-5077

## **Delaware Book Festival November 4, 2006**

The first annual Delaware Book Festival will be held this fall. The festival makes its debut following the successful ten-year run of the Commission's Delaware Book Fair and Authors Day.

The festival will be even bigger and better. The event will showcase national bestsellers, authors who are household names, children's events, workshops and, of course, Delaware writers. Four areas on and around the Legislative Mall in Dover will showcase a different theme. Meet your favorite author and get your cherished book autographed. Stop by the "Delaware Authors" facility to chat with writers who live and work in the First State. Food vendors will line the event and places of interest will be open for visitors within easy walking distance -- such as the Biggs Museum, Hall of Records, Legislative Hall and others.

This event will be free of charge, held rain or shine, on November 4, 2006 in Dover. Additional details will be released later this summer. Please visit the Commission's website for additional information as we move closer to the fall.



**The new edition has updated cover art, a new introduction, a synopsis of the Federal Writers Project in Delaware, and a full-sized map of Delaware as it was in 1938.**

## **Coming Soon...** **Pierre S. duPont IV** **Governor of Delaware**

This fall the Heritage Commission will release the sixth book in the oral history series of Delaware Governors. The series began with Elbert N. Carvel and included Governors Tribbitt, Peterson, Terry, and Townsend.

The book, written by Larry Nagengast of Wilmington, will enter production this summer. We expect an early fall release. *Pierre S. du Pont IV* follows the oral history format shared by the first four books in the Governors Series. The book includes interviews of cabinet and staff members, Rep. Mike Castle, former Secretary of State Glenn C. Kenton, Gov. Pete du Pont and others. The book takes the reader back in time to the duPont administration which steered Delaware back to financial strength during the economic downturn in the 1970s and follows the Governor into the 1980s with the landmark Financial Center Development Act. As it is noted in the book's preface:

*By 1976 times weren't bad; they were awful. Five deficits in seven years had produced the lowest bond rating and the highest income-tax rate — 19.8 percent — of any state in the nation. The high tax rates were a vivid red flag, warning corporations not to expand operations in Delaware, so the state had the second-highest unemployment rate in the nation as well.*

*So in 1976 the voters changed course again, and in November elected Pete du Pont as their 73rd governor.*

Gov. du Pont shares his remembrances of starting out in politics, the school busing situation and desegregation, the battle over the budget, and his run for the Presidency in 1988.

The book also includes a chapter chronicling the First Lady, Elise du Pont, and her role and life during the administration.

Look for updates on our website concerning this book and others to be released by the Delaware Heritage Press.



**Governor and Mrs. Pete du Pont, 1981**

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## **...And** **East of the Mason-Dixon Line:** **A History of the Delaware Boundaries**



The Commission's best selling book, *East of the Mason-Dixon Line* will soon be out-of-print. A revised and updated edition will be released this summer. Stayed tuned to the website for release information. The book will sell for \$5.

**Mason-Dixon Crownstone #55**  
**near Delaware Route 6.**  
**Close up shows the detail of**  
**the armorial shield of the Penn family coat of arms.**



## Commissioners Receive Recognition

### Dr. Reba R. Hollingsworth

Reba R. Hollingsworth, Ph.D., was presented a 2006 Unsung Heroes Award at the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) 60th Annual Northeast Region II Civil Rights Advocacy Training Institute, which was held in Somerset, New Jersey on April 21-23, 2006. The award was based on a legacy of leadership, significant accomplishments and dedicated service to the NAACP and to the community. Dr. Hollingsworth is a life member and chair of the Education Committee of the Milford-Slaughter Neck Branch, NAACP.

Dr. Hollingsworth was also one of two recipients of the Delaware State Education Association (DSEA) 2006 Human and Civil Rights Award which was presented at the Human and Civil Rights Banquet on May 11, 2006 at the Rollins Center at Dover Downs, Dover, Delaware. During the presentation of the award, Sara Ross, National Education Association (NEA) Director, stated that "Reading Reba Hollingsworth's portfolio is like reading the history book you never had in high school social studies. She was not just here when history was made, she was making history."

### Lewis M. "Skipper" Purnell

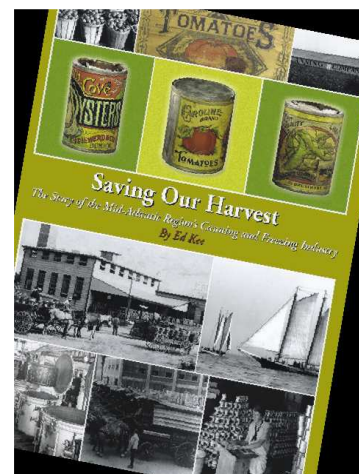
As a way of recognizing the invaluable contributions over many years of Sussex Countian Lewis M. "Skipper" Purnell, the Delaware Heritage Commission has renamed its challenge grant program in his honor. The grant program, which will henceforth be known as the "Purnell Challenge Grant Program" is designed to encourage the efforts of public and private organizations and individuals in projects to preserve their history and heritage.

The Commission took this action to honor Mr. Purnell not only for his many years of service as a commission member but for his contributions as a long-time advocate for Delaware libraries, historical societies, small museums, the Delaware Public Archives and First State history and heritage. The highlight of each year's Joint Finance Committee hearings was his passionate plea for funding libraries, the archives, and historical endeavors. Mr. Purnell was always the last to speak at the hearings, and in a touching tribute this year he received a standing ovation from the members and the public.

Mr. Purnell, a native Sussex Countian, spent some three decades as an official of the U.S. foreign service before returning home in 1975 to what can only be termed a hyperactive retirement. Over the next three decades, he and his wife, Til, distinguished themselves with service on a whole host of state boards and commissions and as activists in a wide variety of causes, including environmental preservation, the League of Women Voters, public libraries, and historical and cultural affairs. They will move this summer to a new home in Charlottesville, Va.

## ***Saving Our Harvest The Story of the Mid-Atlantic Region's Canning and Freezing Industry by Commission member Ed Kee***

In the 1840s, a few pioneering entrepreneurs in Baltimore began preserving Chesapeake Bay oysters by cooking them in hermetically sealed cans. This was the beginning of America's food processing industry. Subsequently, a major food industry that canned and froze vegetables, fruit and seafood spread across the Mid-Atlantic States of Maryland, Virginia, New Jersey, and Delaware. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, nearly 1,000 independent canning companies, representing sixty-one percent of America's canneries, were operating in these four states. The food canning and freezing industry, above all, is the story of innovative people – processors, farmers, mechanics, factory workers, farm workers, oyster shuckers and many more – interacting with each other and their environment as they brought science, technology, old fashioned common sense and an incredible work ethic to bear on the task of growing, processing, and marketing high quality, safe and nutritious canned and frozen foods to America and the World. Read all about it in a fascinating new book by Ed Kee of Lincoln, Delaware.



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in the Del Public Archives for a discounted price of  
\$36.**

# The 1608 Exploration of Delaware

Virginia will celebrate its 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2007. It was in 1607 that Capt. John Smith came to the New World having landed at Jamestown in late April. By May 14 the early colonists began work on a permanent settlement.

This colony was sponsored by the Virginia Company of London and had the charter of King James I in 1606. It was hoped the colony would soon turn a profit for the investors of the company. At this point in history the British goals of colonialism mirrored those of her rivals. The idea, in addition to the profits hoped for in the New World, was to locate a northwest passage to the Orient and converting the native inhabitants of this world to the Anglican religion.<sup>1</sup>



One hundred and four settlers, all men, stepped off the *Susan Constant* (left, replica at Jamestown), *Godspeed*, and *Discovery*, in late April of 1607. They had landed in America and would begin to set

up the first permanent settlement in the New World – thirteen years before the Pilgrims landed on Plymouth Rock. This early Jamestown was governed by a council of seven with one person serving as the council president.<sup>2</sup>

It was not long before difficulties arose. This new English enclave was in the middle of the Algonquin nation. The Algonquin's had learned some English and were ruled by the powerful and feared leader Powhatan. Initial dealings with Powhatan were tenuous at best and combined with poor drinking water and a climate very different from London led to many early diseases and deaths.<sup>3</sup> The settlement held out and in subsequent years was strengthened with the arrival of women and more men.

In 1608 the colony was further strengthened by the emergence of John Smith as president (its fourth since the founding). Smith was the leader the colony needed to survive. One of his first edicts was the simple “no work, no food” policy.<sup>4</sup> A forceful personality, Smith engendered loyalty or hatred from his fellow colonists.

Smith also received orders from the Company to explore the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Smith was

directed to search for valuable minerals, identify wildlife and fish, locate useful stands of forest for lumber, find deepwater ports, and last to investigate the native cultures and to number the warriors in each area visited.<sup>5</sup> Smith created a map from his journey and to this day retains much of its accuracy. Also of note is the fact that many of the place-names Smith devised are still in use today.



Capt. Smith (left) would make two explorations of the Chesapeake. The first in 1608, would take his expedition up the Nanticoke River and into what is now Delaware. How close is the question? Did Smith enter into what is now the First State? Can it be said that the first exploration of Delaware was in 1608?

The adventure began June 3 in a masted, oversized rowboat known as a shallop. Smith took along fourteen men of varied skills. Most had firearm abilities, one was a carpenter, another was a physician. Smith also enjoyed the company of a tailor, blacksmith, fisherman, and fish merchant. His last two selections were soldiers.<sup>6</sup>

Smith's first expedition was to Fisherman's Island off Cape Charles, then to Elliot's Creek near Accomack Town. Future days would take them up Occohannock Creek, Chesconessex Creek, the Pocomoke River and Tangier Sound. By June 8 the shallop sailed into the Nanticoke River (then known as the Kuskarawaok). Almost immediately the small vessel came under attack from the local inhabitants who fired arrows from the shore. Smith steered the shallop out of range and anchored for the night.<sup>7</sup>

The State of Maryland and the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control have studied the details of Smith's map. Comparing his early drawing and sketches and matching those to a present-day snapshot of the river it suggests that Smith's party passed the mouth of Marshyhope Creek, continued beyond Sharptown and around a bend in the river where the Nanticoke crosses into Delaware.<sup>8</sup> Again by comparing Smith's map and journal to the contemporary map of the region it appears Smith may have gone as far as half-mile north of Broad Creek in Sussex County.<sup>9</sup>



# Capt. John Smith and the Nanticoke River



**The Smith shallop on display outside the Delaware Public Archives in May. Gov. Ruth Ann Minner is to the left.**

Smith's shallop and crew of 12 would make another exploration of the Chesapeake Bay region in 1609. This voyage would take Smith into the Potapsco River and north to the Elk Creek, and the Susquehanna and Sassafras Rivers. Late in the journey the men explored the James, Elizabeth and Nansemond Rivers in Virginia.<sup>10</sup> In September Smith would return to Jamestown. Smith was a success in terms of gathering data on local inhabitants, the production of maps, and the formation of alliances with natives. The successes were balanced by failures: Smith did not locate a northwest passage to the Orient nor did he find gold, silver or precious gems.<sup>11</sup>

John Smith left behind volumes of writings and information. His information influenced future generations of explorers and settlers to the New World.<sup>12</sup>

In 1609 Smith was injured by burning gunpowder and returned to England. He never returned to the American colonies.<sup>13</sup>

Smith's departure from Jamestown led to what is termed as the "starving time," a period noted for starvation, disease and bloodshed resulting from Indian hostilities.<sup>14</sup>

Slowly settlers would come to Virginia but it wasn't until 1613 when colonist John Rolfe (who later married Powhatan's daughter Pocahontas) introduced tobacco as a cash crop. Tobacco was a boon to the local economy and Virginia began to prosper.<sup>15</sup> Jamestown would be the center of the Virginia Colony with the placement of a general assembly in 1624. By 1699 the seat of government then moved to Williamsburg. By the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century Jamestown would cease to exist as a town.<sup>16</sup>

In May the Delaware Public Archives celebrated Smith's journeys and its ties to Delaware with the display of a replica shallop painstakingly recreated by the Sultana Foundation in Chestertown, Md. The event also marked Delaware's support for the creation of the Captain Smith Water Trail. The Trail, sponsored by the National Park Service, will be the first National Historic Water Trail in the country.

The Smith Shallop event also opened the Archives "17<sup>th</sup> Century Delaware Exhibit" which continues through to April 2007 at the Archives Building (121 Duke of York St.) in Dover. For more information please visit [www.lib.archives.de.us](http://www.lib.archives.de.us)

-P.B.



1 "A Brief History of Jamestown" Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, Williamsburg, Va.

2 *ibid*

3 *ibid*

4 *ibid*

5 Excerpt from National Park Service Approved Statement of Significance for the Proposed Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Water Trail. Section 1, p. 1 National Park Service, Washington, D.C.

6 *op. cit.* section 7, p. 1

7 *op. cit.* section 7, p.1-2

8 DNREC News. Vol. 36, No. 150. "John Smith Shallop on Display."

9 *ibid*

10 NPS Statement. Section 8, p.1

11 *op. cit.* section 7, p. 1

12 *op. cit.* section 1, p. 2

13 "A Brief History of Jamestown" Jamestown. Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation. Williamsburg, Va.

14 *ibid*

15 *ibid*

16 *ibid*

Check out [www.johnsmith400.org](http://www.johnsmith400.org) for more info and details regarding the 2006 Museum tour schedule as well as next year's reenactment.

## Creating Community Worth Another Look

The story of Delaware is a history of people seeking a better life for themselves and their families. From the Swedes to the Finns to the English, from the Irish to the Italians to the Eastern Europeans and more recently the Asians and many others, Delaware has experienced great waves of immigration that have shaped our identity and heritage. These immigrants along with Native Americans and African Americans, who prior to 1865 arrived in slavery, have combined their strengths and talents to build our State. Each new group eventually finds its way, almost always with great effort and courage. Today, the American Dream and its unending promise still attracts new immigrants to our shores.

After each new wave of immigration ends, historians assemble documents, data, and photographs to try to reconstruct what happened. More recently, historians have gathered oral histories—often conducting interviews in the participant's twilight years as memories may have begun to fade. Seldom have historians had the foresight to gather oral histories while events are still unfolding.



We are bombarded each day in the news with at least one of these questions: “why don’t they speak English?” “why don’t they go home and look for work?” “why do they protest, they’re not even citizens?”

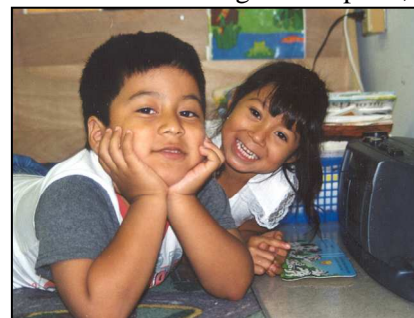
Why did our ancestors come to the United States? What horrors did they endure? How

many of us know that, for boats coming from Europe, there was a stop at a quarantine station outside Delaware where our ancestors, without the right documentation, were detained for long periods of time?

With a growing Hispanic population in southern Delaware, the Delaware Heritage Commission in 2000 engaged a scholar, Dr. Katherine Borland, a former Delaware resident, now an assistant professor of Humanities at Ohio State University, fluent in Spanish,

to find out why. Dr. Borland had friends in southern Delaware, and was willing to ask those questions.

Read about people who will risk their lives to cross borders. Read about people who want to go home and those who want to live here legally. Read about people contributing to their communities sharing their sports, food and religious passion and hard work. Read about the Delawareans who counseled them. The Delaware Heritage



Commission got its answers from Dr. Borland and they are contained within the book, *Creating Community*, available for purchase either on line, at selected bookstores, or in the Public Archives in Dover. There is, in addition, a CD in Spanish of excerpts from the interviews.

*Creating Community: Hispanic Migration to Rural Delaware* is a window into the largest and newest group of immigrants to the United States. The Hispanic community's growth in Delaware has been both extensive and rapid. Like the groups that preceded them, they have gone about finding their way in a new and strange environment. Like immigrant groups of the past, they are a sizeable labor pool that helps to fuel Delaware's economic growth. Yet, like immigrant groups of the past, they are viewed as new and strange. In the interviews found in *Creating Community*, many of us will be reminded of the achievements and struggles of our forebears who came to these shores. We will be reminded that our ancestors and their ethnic community ultimately prevailed against the challenges of language, housing, poverty, and crime.

This is a valuable book because it speaks to every one of us about change. It reminds us of Delaware's diversity and our unity. It reminds us that America's heritage is that of “E Pluribus Unum” —“Out of Many—One.”

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The book sells for \$5 and can be ordered by calling the Commission office at

302-744-5077 or by visiting the Commission's website

[www.state.de.us/heritage](http://www.state.de.us/heritage).

Click onto the “books” page.

A Spanish language CD of over 70 minutes of interviews is also available for \$5.



## Blue Hens in Bronze New statue coming soon

Funding has been approved for the creation of a statue honoring the Delaware Continental soldier from the American Revolution. An accurate depiction of a Continental is being produced by Charles Fithian of the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs. Mr. Fithian has a unique interest in military dress and will outfit the soldier down to the accurate stitch count of the tunic. The depiction of the soldier at right was produced for the book *The Delaware*

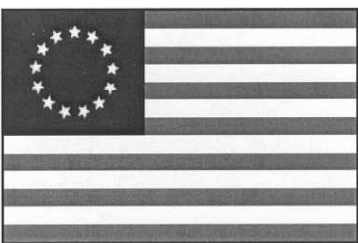


*Continental*s in 1941. Much research has been done in recent years and most historians agree that this probably wasn't the look of the real Delaware soldiers.

Sculptor Ron Tunison of New York has accepted the job of creating the statue. Once complete, the work will stand in the small amphitheater on the Court Street approach to Legislative Hall.

Mr. Tunison has previously worked to capture Delaware history in his work. He was the sculptor of the bas relief on the Delaware Monument placed on the Gettysburg battlefield in April of 2000.

The statue will have three Continental soldiers on a pedestal. Three troops will represent each of Delaware's three counties. The first meeting of the planning group revealed that the best look for the soldiers would be to replicate the uniform the Continentals wore prior to their embarking on the Southern Campaign. The highlight of the uniform was the French "lottery jacket."



Look for updates on the sculpture in future issues of this newsletter and on the Commission website. We will also publicize unveiling festivities when available.

## A Useful Book: Just Released *John Haslet: A Useful One*

Delaware Revolutionary War hero John Haslet is the subject of a new book, relating the 20 years he spent in Delaware as a physician, churchman, husband, father, legislator and, above all, patriot and war hero.

It's entitled *John Haslet: A Useful One*, its title drawn from a remark by Historian Whitfield Bell of the American Philosophical Society that "*The Franklins and the Jeffersons... crowd history's galleries. But (the people) who keep alive the ideas other men conceived and hold together the institutions other men create... They are the ideal trustees, the perfect friends. They are the useful one...*"

Author Fred B. Walters says Haslet's life is a kind of an "everyman" of the American Revolution. Haslet immigrated from Ireland (Ulster) in 1757, fought in the French and Indian War, then established himself in what is now the Milford area. He took up the practice of medicine, married the widow of a prominent Delawarean, reared five children (including a daughter from an earlier marriage in Ireland), became a leading churchman, a member of the Assembly and, finally, commander of the First Delaware Continentals, one of the best fighting units in the Continental Army.

Haslet died in the Battle of Princeton on January 3, 1777, and legend has it that Washington wept over his corpse on the battlefield.

Walters is a retired journalist who has worked in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Philadelphia; New York; Detroit and Los Angeles. David Kenton of the Milford Historical Society and the Milford Landmark and Museum Commission are co-sponsors of *John Haslet: A Useful One*.

**Contact:** Fred Walters (717) 657-9474 or [fredbwal@aol.com](mailto:fredbwal@aol.com) or Dave Kenton at (302) 226-4160.  
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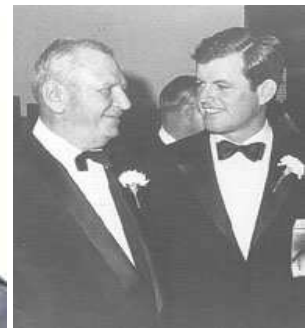
**To read more about the Delaware Continentals** pick up the book, *The Delaware Continentals* by Christopher Ward. The book, first written in 1941, is a reprint of the much heralded original reissued by the Commission in 2003. To order call 302-744-5077 or visit [www.state.de.us/heritage](http://www.state.de.us/heritage).

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<sup>1</sup> “A Brief History of Jamestown” Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, Williamsburg, Va.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*

<sup>5</sup> Excerpt from National Park Service Approved Statement of Significance for the Proposed Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Water Trail. Section 1, p. 1. National Park Service, Washington D.C.

<sup>6</sup> *op cit.*. Section 7, p. 1

<sup>7</sup> *op. cit.* Section 7, p. 1-2

<sup>8</sup> DNREC News. Vol. 36, No. 150. “John Smith Shallop on Display.”

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*

<sup>10</sup> Excerpt from National Park Service Approved Statement of Significance for the Proposed Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Water Trail. Section 8, p. 1. National Park Service. Washington D.C.

<sup>11</sup> *op. cit.* Section , p.

<sup>12</sup> *op. cit.* Section 1, p. 2

<sup>13</sup> “A Brief History of Jamestown” Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, Williamsburg, Va.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*

<sup>15</sup> *ibid*

<sup>16</sup> *ibid*